

Andrew Jackson to John Coffee, July 17, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL JOHN COFFEE.¹

¹ The information in this letter is also embodied in an official report to the Secretary of War, July 14, 1814, in the War Dept. files.

Fort Jackson, July 17, 1814.

D'r Sir: I reached this place on the 10th instant, and found the Fort not half finished, incapable of real defence, surrounded with the under growth, as we left it, and the labour done on the Fort of no account whatever, the Picketts of small round Pine with the bark on, that will rot before the works can be finished. in fact it will take six months labour with the Troops here to make the Fort capable of real defence—daily rumors of the hostile party having reached Pensacola, kindly recd. by the Spanish goverment, and bountifully supplied by the British with arms and amunition, and the officers and men here in a state of unguarded security. I have aroused them, and taken measures to have the place put into a state of defence and security. I have further sent out spies and runners to every quarter to obtain the truth of the rumors, the strength and situation of the Enemy. If they do not come in and submit, against the day appointtd which is the first of next month, a sudden and well directed stroke may be made, that will at once reduce them to unconditional submission.

From the appearence of the troops I think this a healthy situation. it is well supplied with good spring water. I have had no time as yet to take a view of the surrounding country. I will have a good account of it on the return of Capt. Gordon who I have sent with a letter

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to the Governor of Pensacola, who will make correct observations on the country through which he passes, I expect his return in about ten days. This will be a delightfull scite for a Town. I hope in a few days to get the surrounding thickett cleared away that its bea[u]ties can be seen.

Should the rumors of a British force having landed in East Florida be true, I calculate on some warm work, with them and the Indians in the course of the fall season. If auxiliary force should be wanted it must come from Tennessee. There is a few of the hostile party on the black warrior, several runners are gone for them, should they not come in, I shall have to call on some mounted men to aid the militia at Fts. Strother and Williams to scour, the Black warrior and cahaba, kill their warriors and destroy their corn and secreted stock. If I find it necessary I shall make the call on volunteers. . . .